

"Jazz Stunts Are Shattering Our American Nerves"



A Night Scene at Starlight Swimming Pool, New York City, Where the "Wild Waves" Are Wild Jazz Waves and the Dancers Pretty Hard to Tame.

THE trap-drummer in a jazz orchestra, banging cymbals with one hand, flourishing a rattle with the other, and tooting a foghorn with his lips, is just as savage as an African voodoo worshipper. And the people who delight in these explosions of sound are no better. The jazz drummer is shattering the nerves of his auditors more than he is their morals, and his auditors are tamely submitting to the disintegration.

Such, at least, is the opinion of the National Recreation Congress, which, meeting recently in Atlantic City, adopted resolutions condemning jazz as it is played today and urging the American people to stop jazz "stunts" more for physical and spiritual than for moral reasons.

"As a nation we are consuming an unpalatable and decidedly unbalanced musical ration," Prof. Peter W. Dykema of the University of Wisconsin, told the Recreation Congress. "We are musically undernourished. America needs good music as badly as Austria needs good food."

Prof. Dykema's speech startled the Congress, for he is considered one of America's foremost authorities on music. In suggesting a crusade against cowbells, horns, rattles and pistol shots, Prof. Dykema did not condemn jazz in toto.

"Jazz music has a comparatively new rhythmic arrangement of tones," he said. "It has a piquancy and verve and stimulating quality which form a real contribution to music. The objections to it are in the way it is used. It is so atrociously presented with drums, gongs, cowbells, rattles, raucous whistles and other nerve-racking devices that the musical element is almost obliterated. . . . We need not listen. We need not think. All we do is press the button and the noise will do the rest."

And now to provide more power for nerve-shattering, manufacturers are being called on for bigger and bigger musical instruments—violins twice the height of a girl and horns that take three men to handle.

Prof. Dykema's attack on jazz "stunts" as nerve-rackers comes almost simultaneously with another volley at jazz from a distinguished New York jurist, who sees in it an insidious influence on American morals.

"Jazz has worked its way into the life of our city and given its inhabitants a misconception of the purpose of life and the sanctity of marriage vows," declared Judge Alexander Brough, of the Probation court of New York, in a recent interview. "It has put into the populace a nervous desire always to be doing something in a hurry. That's why hundreds of couples marry in haste—and repent the rest of their lives."

Where the Recreation Congress seeks to curb jazz because of its jangle on the nerves, where Judge Brough depicts jazz as partly responsible for the divorce evil, other authorities are discovering that good music can be used

by man to cure his physical ills, to make his labors more efficient, to enhance his skill in art, and to rear a healthier, broader-gauged, nobler generation of his children.

Music is being used in insane asylums to restore reason to maniacs. Music is being used in great manufacturing plants to increase production by employees. Concerts are being given more frequently in penitentiaries with a view to moulding good citizens out of yeggmen. Public schools are mapping out musical curricula, not so much to teach pupils to sing, but to teach them to think.

Music, in short, is about to be harnessed to man's many purposes just as he harnessed electricity and fire and water.

Of course, the discovery of the influence of music in other than esthetic realms is not a new one. Since the days of Alexander the Great generals have known that singing armies fought better than silent armies. Every evangelist from Wesley to Billy Sunday has depended on music to awaken the religious emotions of his audience. Music has driven some men to murder and some men to martyrdom.

But not until recent years—and, in fact, till recent months—have medical men, business efficiency experts, social workers, executives of every class begun to employ music systematically as a force as powerful, in its way, as steam or steel.

The movies were among the first to discover its possibilities. When the violins played Massenet's "Elegie," the leading lady could sob much better than when the strings were stilled. When the band struck up a merry march, the comedians could make funnier faces than if the band was

So Prof. Dykema Declares as He Deplores the Rhythmic Attack on Morals and Health, and Likens the Trap-Drummer to a Voodoo Worshipper.

Even a Profound Egotist Might Hesitate to Blow His Own if He Owned This Prize Horn. It Takes Three Men to Toot It, in Fact.



Cincinnati's Prize Bassoon, Six Feet High, Is Played by a "Little Girl."

absent. Now no Hollywood "let" is without its orchestra.

"Business men took a tip from the pictures. One of the biggest factories in New Jersey is equipped with phonographs on every floor. Its manager has discovered his girls work faster and more accurately if a popular song drowns out the whirr of the belts. One of the biggest barber shops in New York City furnishes music with its shaves and haircuts. The proprietor says a

The Biggest Violin in the World—11 Feet 7 Inches Tall, 4 Feet 7 Inches Wide, 13 Inches Deep, 150 Pounds Weight; Strings the Thickness of a Man's Finger and 7 Feet 10 Inches Long; Bridge 12 Inches High, and a Bow 39 Inches. Habitat—New York City.

patron can be "played" into getting a shampoo, a massage and a manicure where he would depart after a shave only under less soothing conditions.

The United States Penitentiary in Atlanta not only has regular concerts for its inmates, but encourages them to be musicians themselves. There is a band and a glee club. There is also a daily "music hour," when for 60 minutes every prisoner in the "pen" can play on an instrument of his own choosing. The effect to the visitor is bedlam, but officials say the men are made more contented and, in some instances, have left the prison, after a steady musical diet, with good resolutions they attribute directly to the musical influence.

Moskay Boguslawski, a young professor of piano in the Chicago Musical College, demonstrated to the American medical world what concrete things music can do for the feeble-minded. Noting in his work the profound influence of music on normal minds, he concluded that it would have a like influence on diseased

men. With the permission of the authorities, he conducted a series of experiments covering more than a year at the Chicago State Hospital at Danmang, Ill.

There, after studying the data concerning cases which came under his observation, he evolved a system from which he believes permanent cures may be attained; a belief which he says is concurred in by the medical authorities. This is the basis of his system:

Music can do in the case of the insane person what medical science hitherto has failed to do—take the patient's mind off the one thing which obsesses him and carry him back to the memory of the days which preceded the cause of his particular derangement. There is no telling, however, to what type of music a mind will respond and it is only by experiment and close observation of the patient during the playing that the particular piece which will open the door of his memory is hit upon.

"One of my cases," he said, "was an Italian woman patient who had become insane and deserted her baby at birth. The hospital authorities could do nothing with her, and she spent her days crouching in a corner of the ward. I played to her everything I could think of without producing any noticeable result. Suddenly it occurred to me to try the 'Miserere' from 'Il Trovatore.' The effect on the woman was instantaneous; she burst into tears and a short while afterward began to ask coherent questions about her baby and her husband. On being questioned as to the melody that moved her so much, she said she could remember her father singing it when she was a child."

Even such ardent advocates of the beneficial use of music as Prof. Boguslawski do not claim everything for it. They strike a medium position such as that taken by the National Recreation Congress in its discussion of jazz. One of the speakers before the Congress, Prof. A. T. Davi-

Here Is the Foo Foo Band of the Ocean Greyhound Celtic Trying to Live Up to Prof. Dykema's Comparison to African Voodoo Worshippers.



Even the Youngsters Go in for Jazz. This Kid Jazz Band Entertained the Grown-ups at New York City Concert.

son, of Barnard College, expressed it in these words:

"Although I believe with all my heart in the power of great music to accomplish many things, I do not believe that Bach is a cure for shoplifting or that the strains of a Beethoven adagio will stay the pyromaniac's hand. Music is an art, not a policeman, and what music does to us depends upon what impulses are in us for music to set to work. We may admit, however, that music which is beautiful and great because of its qualities has a better chance of generating good emotions and stimulating right thinking than music which is merely pretty or primarily physical in its appeal."